

# Attention paid to veterans

## OPINION

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### OTHER VIEWS

## WWII veteran's stories enlighten

By U.S. Rep. Bart Gordon

Jordan McElroy, a Middle Tennessean, was in Washington last week visiting national monuments and memorials.

Mr. McElroy was most excited about seeing the National World War II Memorial — it would be his first time visiting the site in his life. He had fought in World War II and was awarded with two Bronze Star Medals for his bravery in combat.

Mr. McElroy wore his WWII uniform when he visited the National WWII Memorial. He also wore his military uniform when he saw other monuments in Washington. At each site, he was stopped by people of all ages who just wanted to shake Mr. McElroy's hand and thank him for his service to our country.



Gordon

It was not Veterans Day, and none of these people personally knew Mr. McElroy. They also did not know his story. These people had simply recognized that he was a veteran, and they wanted to meet and thank the man.

I met Mr. McElroy this past Friday, just three days after his 83rd birthday. As he told me about his humbling war story, the soldiers he fought with, and his experience at the WWII Memorial and the other national monuments, it helped me to personally appreciate the importance of Veterans Day — of what today means. It also made me remember that these heroes deserve to be honored not only on Nov. 11, but every day.

### Honor veterans every day

After serving our country in war, Mr. McElroy dedicated the next 36 years of his life to working at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Murfreesboro as a nurse's aide, caring for veterans. Mr. McElroy spent his life serving others, and making the lives of other veterans better.

Today, Mr. McElroy lives in Smyrna. He still has the spirit of a young man who, at the age of 19, went into Belgium in early 1945 with the U.S. Army.

Mr. McElroy is just one of the many veterans who live among us and have incredible stories to tell. We set aside this day, Nov. 11, each year to honor these men and women who put their lives in danger to defend our country in times of war.

While we have put this day aside, we should never hesitate to thank and pay tribute to a veteran tomorrow or on any other day of the year.

The undeniable truth is that without their service and dedication, we wouldn't be the nation we are today. It is for this reason that veterans deserve to be honored every day of the year, just like Mr. McElroy was throughout his trip.

U.S. Rep. Bart Gordon of Murfreesboro represents Tennessee's Sixth District in the U.S. House of Representatives.



Jordan McElroy, 83, of Smyrna, on a trip to see the National World War II Memorial in Washington.